

OBSOLETE CHEMICALS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

FEASIBILITY STUDY

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1. Introduction

Following the transition to a market economy, many of the existing state farms and village co-operatives in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) have ceased to function. One of the consequences of this development is that stocks of agricultural pesticides and other chemicals are often left under poor management conditions and sometimes completely uncontrolled, thereby posing a severe threat to human health and the environment.

In many CEE countries, the responsibility for these stocks lies with national or local governments which often lack the technical and financial capacity to adequately handle this problem.

In response to the increasing threat of these 'chemical time bombs', several different national and bilateral activities have been carried to address this problem. The approaches taken in those initiatives included repackaging, local incineration, and transport of such stocks to an EU Member State.

The initiatives carried out to date show that:

- stocks of obsolete chemicals in countries of CEE are a serious but manageable problem;
- the approaches in handling stocks of obsolete chemicals vary from country to country and from storage place to storage place,
- the way in which this problem has been addressed in CEE countries is often on an *ad hoc* basis and with financial and technical support from outside the country;
- crucial to the success of addressing this problem are 1) political will of the national and local authorities and 2) the involvement of all stakeholders.

In order to make optimal use of the limited technical and financial resources available within and outside the CEE region, it is imperative that:

- 1) there is **political will** to address to address the problem in collaboration with **all stakeholders**, and that
- 2) **a systematic, co-ordinated approach** is taken in which per country an inventory is made of the present stocks of obsolete chemicals, and of the technical, logistical and financial possibilities to handle such stocks in that country.

With a view to assisting CEE countries in developing such a systematic, co-ordinated approach, the Dutch Ministry of the Environment will carry out the 6 month feasibility study described below.

¹ This project document will be updated as the project progresses. For updates, please approach the contact persons - See under 'further information'.

2. Objective and products of the feasibility study.

The **objective** of the feasibility study is to assist CEE countries in developing a systematic, co-ordinated approach towards obsolete chemicals, by assisting in identifying the technical, logistical and financial possibilities.

As a start, the feasibility will be limited to obsolete pesticides and to a number of demonstration countries². Time and resources permitting, this study may be broadened to include other chemicals than pesticides and/or other demonstration countries.

The **products** of the feasibility study will be:

- A compilation of technical manuals:
 - a manual to which enable countries to make inventories of stocks of obsolete pesticides; such inventories of stocks include their location, volume, composition and the conditions under which they are stored; this manual will also include an overview of most common obsolete pesticides;
 - a manual with different technical possibilities of handling such stocks.These manuals will be made in collaboration with organisations with experience in this field, such as FAO, UNEP and OECD.
- For the demonstration countries, an assessment of the local technical and logistical possibilities:
 - to make an inventory of stocks of obsolete pesticides (e.g. existing local and national networks of authorities and NGOs);
 - to handle stocks (e.g. the available local capacities for adequate packaging, transport and incineration).These assessments will be made in close collaboration with local and national authorities and NGOs.
- A matrix of funds which can be approached with requests for budgets needed to address this problem. This matrix will include for the different funds: 1) the type of activities for which applications can be submitted, 2) the size of the funds, 3) who can apply, 4) the requirements for applications.
- A guidance document to prepare and submit project proposals to identified funds.
- A project proposal for inventories of stocks of obsolete pesticides in a number of demonstration countries; this project proposal will be submitted to identified funds.

² Countries in which national and local authorities and organisations have indicated to participate in this feasibility study Slovakia, Hungary and Lithuania.

3. Organisation - modus operandi

The project will start on September 1, 2000 and terminate in March, 2001.

The feasibility study will be carried out by Michal Oppenheimer and Sander Grip from the Dutch Ministry of the Environment. The project coordinator is Piet van der Meer from the Directorate for International Environmental Affairs.

For the implementation of this feasibility study, close cooperation has been and will be sought with local and national authorities and NGOs and international organisations such as UNEP, FAO, OECD and the Regional Environmental Centre. A Guidance Committee for the project has been established consisting of experts from the Dutch Government.

The results of the project, including the manuals and matrix of funds, will be made widely available, among others through Internet and conferences.

4. Work plan and time schedule

The tentative work plan and time schedule are:

September 2000: preparatory work (mostly by phone and email). The first progress report with first drafts for the manuals, assessments and matrix will be submitted to the Guidance Committee at the end of September

October 2000/early November 2000: further development of the manuals, assessments and the funds matrix on the basis of the comments of the Guidance Committee and on the basis of visits to a number of sites in Slovakia and Hungary.

November 2000: on the basis of the results of the first two months: production of a detailed project proposal for the production of inventories of stocks for a number of demonstration countries.

December 2000 – January 2001: further development of the manuals, assessments, matrix and guidance documents by, among others, visiting sites in Lithuania, and follow up of submission of project proposal where necessary.

February 2001: production of the final report.

March 2001: Presentation of the results of the project through Internet and at conferences³.

Information

For further information, please contact Michal Oppenheimer or Sander Grip:

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³ E.g. the 6th Int. HCH &Pesticides Forum" which is scheduled on March 13-15 2001 in Poznan, Poland.